

What is claimed is:

1. A method for detecting an actuation of an operator-controlled element having various adjustable degrees of actuation, the method comprising the steps of:

realizing various operator-controlled functions in

5 dependence upon the degree of actuation of said

operator-controlled element;

actuating said operator-controlled element against a spring force with two degrees of actuation being characterized by two different spring constants, respectively; and,

10 detecting at least one of said operator-controlled functions in dependence upon the spring constant assigned to the instantaneous degree of actuation.

2. The method of claim 1, comprising the further steps of:

detecting the degree of the actuation of said operator-controlled element utilizing a sensor;

causing said sensor to generate a measurement signal in  
5 dependence upon said degree of actuation;

determining a time-dependent course of said measurement signal; and,

10 detecting at least one of said operator-controlled functions in dependence upon the slope of said time-dependent course of said measurement signal.

3. The method of claim 2, comprising the further step of detecting at least one of said operator-controlled functions when the slope of said time-dependent course of said measurement signal lies in a pregiven region.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein said pregiven region is defined by a threshold value.

5. The method of claim 3, comprising the further step of selecting said pregiven region so that the time-dependent change of said measurement signal is reached not via actuation but only via an automatic reset of said operator-controlled element.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein said automatic reset is achieved with a virtually jump-shaped reduction of said spring force.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein said virtually jump-shaped reduction of said spring force is effected by the spring constant assigned to the corresponding operator-controlled function.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said operator-controlled element is an accelerator pedal of a motor vehicle; said at least one operator-controlled function is a kick-down function or an escape-switch function to overcome an activated speed limiting; and, at least one degree of actuation of said accelerator pedal in the vicinity of a stop is assigned to said at least one operator-controlled function.

9. The method of claim 1, comprising the further step of detecting said at least one operator-controlled function only when said at least one operator-controlled function is detected several times within a pregiven time interval.

10. An arrangement for detecting an actuation of an

operator-controlled element having different degrees of  
actuation, the arrangement comprising:

5        means for realizing various operator-controlled functions in  
dependence upon the degree of actuation of said  
operator-controlled element;

      means for actuating said operator-controlled element against  
a spring force with two degrees of actuation being characterized  
by two different spring constants, respectively; and,

10       means for detecting at least one of said operator-controlled  
functions in dependence upon the spring constant assigned to the  
instantaneous degree of actuation.